UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in Geneva, meets with Justice Richard Goldstone, Chief Prosecutor of International Tribunal for former Yugoslavia; continues high level diplomatic efforts to reach negotiated settlement to conflict in former Yugoslavia.

+ General Assembly proclaims 1995 as World Year of People's Commemoration of Victims of Second World War; to hold special solumn meeting on 18 October to commemorate sacrifices caused by War.

+ Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Commmittee introduces draft proposing moratorium on pending executions and abolition of death penalty.

+ Special Political and Decolonization Committee concludes work by asking General Assembly to call on Israel to rescind decision to impose its laws and jurisdiction in occupied Syrian Golan.

+ In message to mark International Day of Disabled Persons, Secretary-General says societies which accommodate human diversity respect fundemental freedoms and mobilize people's full potential.

+ More than 80 countries have national committees on United Nations fiftieth anniversary; General Assembly to hold solemn session; week-long commemorative activities planned in San Francisco.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali arrived in Geneva today, where he plans to give priority to continued efforts to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. He met with the Justice Richard Goldstone, Chief Prosecutor of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Tomorrow, Thorvald Stoltenberg, Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia, is expected to arrive in Geneva to meet with the Secretary-General.

Later today, the Secretary-General met with the leader of the Turkish Cypriots, Rauf Denktash at his request.

On Sunday, the Secretary-General will travel to Budapest. He will meet with Hungarian President Arpad Goncz and later will attend a working dinner with the Hungarian political Secretary of State at the Foreign Ministry. He will deliver an opening address to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) on Monday.

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In Sarajevo today, Sagger missiles struck the building where Special Representative Yasushi Akashi, and United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) commanders, General Bertrand de Lapresle and Lieutenant-General Michael Rose, were meeting with Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic. According to a United Nations spokesman, three missiles also hit the Parliament building yesterday. Mr. Akashi later went to Pale, where he was expected to meet with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic. Yesterday in Pale, Lieutenant-General Rose reached an agreement with the Bosnian Serbs on the release of three UNPROFOR convoys in eastern Bosnia.

The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen attended a signing ceremony in Zagreb today of an economic agreement between the Croatian Government and the Croatian Serbs. The agreement covers the opening of routes, rail lines and other communications as well as the restoration of utilities.

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The General Assembly today proclaimed 1995 as World Year of People's Commemoration of the Victims of the Second World War and decided to hold a special solumn meeting on 18 October to commemorate the sacrifices caused by the War. Introducing the resolution, which was adopted without a vote, the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth of Independent States, said the draft reiterated the willingness of nations to overcome the vestiges of war and create a new atmosphere of international harmony. The representative of Israel said the war launched by the Nazis shattered the entire world and directed special fury against the Jewish people. He called on the United Nations to fight fanaticism, fascism and dictatorship.

In other action today, the Assembly adopted a number of resolutions, on the coordination of humanitarian assistance. They included two texts, also adopted without a vote, urging States and financial institutions to help rehabilitate the Rwandan economy and to provide economic and technical assistance to countries receiving Rwandan refugees. Other resolutions adopted dealt with: assistance to States affected by the imposition of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); the financing of the Palestinian police force, and special assistance to Burundi. The Assembly voted to adopt a resolution which reaffirmed the importance of the South Atlantic to global maritime and commercial transactions.

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The Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) yesterday concluded its work by asking the Assembly to call on Israel to "rescind forthwith" its decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan. By the terms of a draft resolution, approved by a vote of 108 in favour to 1 against, with 13 abstentions, the Assembly would also call on Israel to stop establishing its settlements in the occupied Golan.

In addition, the Assembly would call on Israel to stop its efforts to change the physical character, demography, and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan. The Assembly would determine that all Israeli legislative and administrative measures purporting to alter the character and legal status of the occupied Golan have no legal effect. Israel would also be called on to stop imposing Israeli citizenship and identity cards on the Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan and to desist from its repressive measures against the population there.

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The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) yesterday introduced a draft resolution by which the General Assembly would encourage States that have not abolished the death penalty to consider a moratorium on pending executions. The Assembly would take that action to ensure that the principle that no State should dispose of any human life would be universally affirmed by the year 2000.

The Assembly would call upon States that have not yet done so to consider acceding to or ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Countries that have not yet abolished the death penalty would be asked to consider the progressive restriction of the number of offences for which the death penalty may be imposed and to exclude insane persons from capital punishment.

Introducing the draft, the representative of Italy, said there was an attempt under way to block a vote by using a "no-action motion" in order to allow some countries to avoid pronouncing themselves on the draft. Each country should cast aside delaying tactics and vote its conscience, he added.

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Disabled persons challenged the world to grow, and to build a society which advanced freedoms and addressed the needs and contributions of all its members, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said today. In a message to mark the International Day of Disabled Persons, he stresssed that a society which accommodated human diversity not only respected fundamental freedoms, but also mobilized the full potential of all its people.

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The Secretary-General said that United Nations efforts since the 1970s had brought tangible results but more was required. Adequate resources and firm political resolve were needed to transform into reality the requirements made by the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons adopted in 1982. Through upcoming conferences and in other ways, the Organization must continue to integrate disability concerns into the wider effort to construct a new vision for development and framework for development cooperation.

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More than 80 countries have established national committees to plan activities to celebrate the United Nations fiftieth anniversary, the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary was told yesterday. Committee Chairman Richard Butler (Australia), said that a solemn session of the General Assembly would be held at United Nations Headquarters from 22 to 24 October and a Declaration on the Fiftieth Anniversary was expected at the session.

The city of San Francisco planned a week of activities to mark the anniversary, including the signing of a commemorative document on the Charter, Mr. Butler said. Referring to the duration of speeches by Heads of State and Government during the commemorative session, he noted there might be approximately 150 of them and suggested each leader present an abridged version of his or her statement, with publication of the full text later.

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